

July 2025

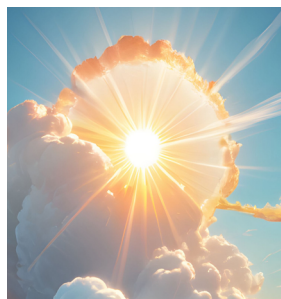
THE WINE PRESS

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THE WINE PRESS



Pressing into Truth, Pouring out His Grace

July 2025

Faith That Holds in a Shaking World

There are moments in history that feel like they split time—where the weight of what’s happening in the world presses in on our daily lives. For many, this is one of those moments. The wars in the Middle East and Ukraine have stirred up fear, sorrow, and deep questions. What’s coming next? Where is God in all of this? Can we trust Him with a future that feels so uncertain?

This month’s issue is for everyone who’s ever worried, doubted, panicked, or considered moving to a cabin in the woods with no Wi-Fi. (Tempting, right?) We’re exploring what it means to walk by faith when the world shakes, to pray with boldness when we feel small, and to remember that even in the darkest hours, God’s promises still stand.

The good news? God hasn’t changed. He’s still faithful. Still near. Still writing a story that’s bigger than anything unfolding on the headlines. Whether you’re walking through fire or simply watching the storm clouds gather, there’s reason to take heart—because we’re not alone, God is still at work, and the story isn’t over!

The Wine Press is a thoughtfully curated collection of articles from across the web, compiled to inspire, encourage, and deepen your walk with our King and Savior, Jesus Christ. All articles remain the property of their respective authors to whom we joyfully give full credit and our appreciation for sharing their wisdom and experiences with us. May these words uplift your spirit, strengthen your faith, and draw you into ever deeper communion with the God of all grace.

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Jesus Hasn't Changed - And He Never Will

A Compilation

At the time of writing this, my husband and I had just come out of a year and a half where battles never ended. He was very sick and had been in and out of the hospital for months, and he had to have an operation. Alongside his health problems, we had legal issues, and then the financial burdens of trying to support ourselves and the hospital bills increasing by the day. I felt my faith and strength being tested to the limit. My ability to trust that God was really watching over us and truly loved us, with all we were facing, was rapidly diminishing.

One day, under the shade of a cherry tree with the beautiful sunshine and warmth of spring, I was sitting outside reading, and I came to the verse “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). I decided to meditate on this.

Starting with the first words “Jesus Christ,” I thought long about Jesus, who He is, Him being God in human form, His name being so blessed and wonderful and called on in time of desperation.

I then added “is”—Jesus Christ is... One definition given for “is” in the dictionary was to “be present.” Jesus Christ is present with me. He simply is!

Then I added “the.” “The” refers to something singular; it’s not they or many, but one. One definition of “the” is “used to

refer to a person, place, or thing that is unique.” So Jesus Christ is present and is unique.

The next word I meditated on was “same.” Jesus Christ is the same. “Same” means identical, not different. I thought about days when the sun was shining in my life and Jesus was just wonderful to me. If He was not different now, then why would I look at Him differently, even though my world seemed to be tumbling around me?

Jesus had never changed. I was the one who had changed. I had let what was happening in my life change the way I viewed Christ. Jesus never changes, so how can He be any less great now than He was in times past? This thought hit me like a ray of sunshine. I realized I had found something to hold on to and that my faith in Christ isn’t about what happens to me.

I never got past the word “same” in my meditation, but I think I got the point. I knew that whatever happens, whatever dark clouds may gather, and whatever twists and turns the road of my life may take, Jesus will never change. What had changed was my view of Him—not Him, not His love, not His ability to reach down and take care of me and my problems. Whatever the future may bring, I know that Jesus is the same—yesterday, today, and forever!—Chloe Rose



Do you need a miracle today? Do you need Jesus to set you free from some dreadful affliction from the enemy? Do you need Him to heal you of an illness? Do you need Him to multiply what little you have and make it go further than it ever would without His intervention? Do you need Him to give you heaven's peace in an earthly storm? Do you need His miraculous provision in a time of lack?

If so, remember what Jesus did 2,000 years ago. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead, provided for the hungry, brought peace to the storm-struck, delivered the demonized, and gave dignity to the vilified. Has our Jesus changed since then? No, not one little bit. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever! He's always the same. He's always totally Himself.

Miracles are not something He did then but doesn't do now! No, God says, "I am your Healer," not, "I was your Healer" (Exodus 15:26). Put your trust in Jesus. Ask Him to stretch out His mighty hand and bless your life or your loved ones'

lives with His life-changing power.—
God's Word for Every Need



The Bible clearly expresses the immutability of God—His unchanging, consistent nature—in numerous passages. James communicates it like this: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" (James 1:17). ...

God created the universe with its continually varying conditions, yet He remains eternally the same (Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6). The same can be said of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:8).

There is no shadow of turning with God's character. His love and faithfulness are constant (Psalm 89:2; 136:1–26; 2 Timothy 2:13). He is forever perfect (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:31) and holy (1 Samuel 2:2). His love for His children never fails (Romans 8:38–39; Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:8).

There is no shadow of turning with God's purposes and promises.... God does not lie or change His mind (Numbers 23:19). ... The Lord always accomplishes His will and keeps His promises (Psalm 145:13).

There is no shadow of turning with God's Word: "The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8). ...

Because there is no shadow of turning with God, we can put our whole trust and faith in Him... When difficulties and temptations arise, we must not let the shifting shadows obscure our confidence in the Father of lights.—GotQuestions.org



God never changes. The Bible clearly tells us that God is unchanging. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Malachi 3:6 says, "I am the Lord, and I do not change." While everything around us is changing, we can depend on God continually showing us His grace, love, and compassion. All our material possessions may blow away, but God is still there. ...

Just think about that for a moment. How many friends have you had and lost or become distant from over the years because you just "grew apart"? It's because one of you changed. But God never changes.

God is unchanging in His existence. There has never been a time when God was not. There will never be a time when He will cease to be. Psalm 102:27 says, "But you are always the same; you will live forever." All that He is today, He has always been, and forever will be. He cannot improve for the better, because He is already perfect. His power can never diminish, and His glory will never fade. His existence never changes.

His Mercy is unchanging. Psalm 100:5 says, "For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness

continues to each generation." The same is true with His sovereignty, holiness, power, faithfulness, goodness, patience, grace, and even His wrath. His attributes never change.

The God we serve is the same God today as He was the day He raised Jesus from the grave. He is the same God today as He was when He spoke the world into existence. He is the God who saves, and He is the God in whom you can place your hope. If God never changes, then that means His love is forever. His forgiveness is forever. His salvation is forever. His promises are forever. His attributes are forever.

We should find extreme comfort in God's unchanging nature. Every created thing in this life will let you down at some point in time. Whether it is circumstances, relationships, health, career, children, technology, etc. However unstable the circumstances around us are, God never changes.

A.W. Tozer said, "God never changes moods or cools off in His affections or loses enthusiasm. His attitude toward sin is now the same as it was when He drove out the sinful man from the garden, and His attitude toward the sinner the same as when He stretched forth His hand and cried, 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"—Northstar Church



Abide with me, fast falls the eventide;

The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide...

Change and decay in all around I see;

O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

—Henry F. Lyte

Don't Be Afraid God's in Control

by Thomas Tarrants, III

In troubled times like these, existential threats to our health, families and livelihoods can loom large, robbing us of peace. Fear and anxiety can become our constant companions, propelling us into a downward emotional spiral and feelings of hopelessness and despair. The future can seem bleak; indeed, it can be bleak.

Where can we look for help in such times? In the face of the most terrifying calamity he could imagine, the Psalmist was confident that God was ultimately in control of the world. He said, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling” (Psalm 46:1–3, ESV).

Compassionate and Sovereign

God is the One to whom we must turn in such times. He is the sovereign, all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, Creator of heaven and earth. And He is our heavenly Father, who loves us and is truly “a very present help in trouble.” Nothing takes him by surprise, and nothing can thwart his will. He tells us, “I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’” (Isaiah 46:9–10, ESV). God cares for us and will be with us no matter what befalls us, “for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those

who fear him” (Psalm 103:11, ESV). Truly, “as a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. He knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13–14, ESV). Yes, God knows very well how weak and frail we are, how prone we are to fears and anxieties in life, and how easily we can feel overwhelmed – and He looks on us with compassion. The more we ponder His grace and love and Fatherly care for us, the more our hearts will overflow with grateful love and peace. And when we turn to him, we shall find His arms open and waiting. Truly, our only hope is God and his Son, Jesus Christ, who alone can give us the help and comfort we need in these difficult days.

Turning to God is not a sentimental glance in his direction but a focus on who He is and a confident trust in him to be with us and to help us. King David, who had faced many dangers, said, “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1, ESV). He tells us, “I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed” (Psalm 34:4–5, ESV). And he encourages everyone, “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us” (Psalm 62:8, ESV). The prophet Isaiah, living in turbulent times, could testify that, “You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock” (Isaiah 26:3–4, ESV).

Receiving God's Peace

To his fearful, anxious disciples, Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27, ESV). With that truth in his mind and heart, Peter, in the shadow of Nero’s persecution, could say to believers, cast “all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter. 5:7, ESV). Similarly, Paul could say, “do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7, ESV).

Trusting God in the storm does not mean we will be untouched. God does not promise that we will escape suffering and pain in this fallen world, but he does promise to be with us as we pass through it. In the storms I have been through, I’ve found Isaiah 43:1–3 to be true, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not

overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.” Best of all, Jesus assures us, “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20, ESV). All of these come together for me in the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism: Question: “What is your only comfort in life and death? Answer: That I am not my own but belong body and soul to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.”

What if our worst fears come to pass – job loss, sickness, even death? It may not be easy, but God promises to be with us through these things as well, and even to use them for good in our lives (the good of our souls in becoming more like Jesus). As Paul said, “we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28, ESV). Having been through a number of painful experiences in life, I can look back and see how God has been with me and has used them to help me become more like Jesus, and I am grateful. But I think there is a caveat. Suffering forces upon us a binary choice: we must either turn to God or away from God.

Facing the Future with Faith

We can face the future in faith or in fear.



Walking in faith means keeping our eyes on God and his promises, and not on our problems. We can do this because He has given us “a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control” (2 Timothy 1.7, ESV). This means we can reject fear and trust God, who loves us, who rules the world, and for whom nothing is impossible. If instead we focus on our problems, it will only feed fear in our hearts and undermine our faith. Jesus’s disciples were terrified as they desperately fought to survive a life-threatening storm on the Sea of Galilee. Only when they turned their eyes upon Jesus and cried out for his help did they find deliverance (Mark 4:35-41, ESV). Truly, fear is the polio of the soul that keeps us from walking by faith. This, of course, doesn’t mean putting our head into the sand and ignoring reality. Rather, it means looking at the problem with cold, sober realism against the greater backdrop of God’s sovereignty, power, grace and love. Our lives and our times are in his hand.

Faith especially grows through seeking God and drawing near to him by prayerfully reading, pondering and obeying His word, which is filled with wisdom, hope, encouragement, and direction. Many blessings await us as we read the Bible daily. Psalms is a particularly good place to read in hard times like these, always beginning with prayer for the Holy Spirit to give us understanding as we read. Another key to a growing faith is pouring out our hearts to God in prayer each day – prayer for God’s comfort, strength, wisdom, cleansing from sin, and the Holy Spirit’s filling, empowerment and guidance. When we draw near to God in these ways, we will discover him drawing near to us (James. 4:8, ESV). Truly, prayer and Scripture are two of the most vital resources God has given us for walking with Him through the storms of life and coming out the other side stronger.

Keeping Our Eyes on God

For those who are asking why a good God would allow this (or the many other evils that have beset our world over time), the answer is simple. We need only remember that we are not living in the good world God originally created – a world in which sin, sickness, death and disasters were unknown. In a very real sense, we are living in a world man created when Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God and in doing so triggered the catastrophic effects that followed and are with us today. One of those is the disruption of nature and the created order, which has been “groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Romans 8:22, ESV). Plagues, famines, tsunamis, and pandemics are some of results of that disruption. But God was gracious to our first parents in spite of their sin, and he is gracious to us in spite of ours, so we can have hope, even in the worst of times!

As we go through the difficult days ahead, let us remind ourselves again and again that God is sovereign: He is in control, He loves us, and He is faithful. And let us often ponder these words: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:35–39, ESV).

Read the article here: <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/dont-be-afraid-god-is-in-control/>

Gardening through the Apocalypse

By Paul D. Miller

My first memory of world events was the Challenger explosion. I was in 3rd grade, and it was weeks after my 8th birthday. What was supposed to be a happy triumph became its opposite. The weird mix of shock, embarrassment, and guilt at watching people die on live TV embedded in my memory so deeply that, 34 years later, I felt apprehensive echoes waiting to see if Space X would become the first private company to launch humans into space.

My next memory of world events was happier: the fall of the Berlin Wall. But then a parade of horrors: the Gulf War, the Balkan Wars, the Rwandan genocide and — looming as a turning point around which all else was “before” or “after” — the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

The hits kept coming: war in Afghanistan, the Beltway Sniper (2002), war in Iraq, the financial meltdown of 2008, the rise of ISIS, the volatility of our national government over the last several years, the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, COVID-19, pandemic lockdowns, and mass unemployment, and now war in Ukraine and the specter of nuclear escalation around the corner. Also, two hurricanes, an earthquake, and a record-setting blizzard that hit my home all within three years of each other.

I’m tired of living through interesting times. We bear witness to ceaseless pain,

suffering, and death, and for the most part we are utterly powerless to do anything about it — except, perhaps, help clean up afterward.

Remember truth, and finding comfort

In the face of such tumult, what would Jesus do? I’m pretty sure he would say, “I told you so.” Because he did: “And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains” (Matt. 24:6-8).

This is, oddly, comforting. As often as we hear that we live in unprecedented times, our times are, sadly, quite unprecedented. The technology changes, as does the speed with which we can become aware of tragedy happening on the other side of the world, but otherwise war, privation, pestilence, and death are so common as to be timeless symbols of human affliction, immortalized as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in Ezekiel and Revelation. There is nothing new under the sun.

I need to remember these truths. In the spring of 2020, a couple months into the

pandemic, I had something close to a panic attack. Watching the economic collapse and social disruption, I feared what kind of social and political fallout we'd be enduring for years to come.

A few months later, we had the largest civil unrest in 50 years with the protests after George Floyd's murder. Six months after that, we had the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. Now, a year later, we have a major war in Europe.

The pandemic didn't cause these things. But, as many others observed, the pandemic was an accelerant and a pressure cooker. The pandemic amplified a lot of what was already there. In some cases, it was maybe the thing that tipped the scales and made bad things more likely. I feel certain we are not done yet. Wars and rumors of wars; nation rising against nation.

God does not call on us to respond to all this with Buddhist detachment. The pain and suffering in the world is real, and it is bad, and we should eagerly hope and pray for it to end. Nor should we Bible-slap one another with a cavalier James 1 reminder to rejoice in trials of all kinds. That is wise counsel to help us prepare for suffering ahead of time, but often not the most helpful message to give in the moment of suffering.

How should we respond?

I suggest several responses to the misery we witness.

First, lament for the world. Many Christians have forgotten the [spiritual discipline of lament](#). But the Bible gives us plenty of examples in the Psalms, in Lamentations, and elsewhere of [crying out to the Lord](#), wailing before him, putting words to our grief and pain, asking boldly for God's deliverance and mercy, and expressing our hopeful trust in him.

Second, love your neighbor. And by "neighbor" I mean "every human you

meet." Life is too short to spend it being a jerk. Everyone you meet has something they have suffered from or are suffering from right now. So, go easy on them. Love them with a kind word, or a smile, or a compliment, including your Uber driver, the lady behind the counter at the DMV, the guy who cut you off in traffic, and the annoying co-worker with bad social manners. Doing so helps share their burdens, and may help ease your own.

Third, cultivate your garden. This is how Voltaire puts it in the immortal final line of his novel *Candide*. In other words, take responsibility for whatever small patch of creation is within your care. Nobody reading this can stop the war in Ukraine. But we can do a hundred small acts to steward our homes, love our families, and serve in our workplaces. "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might," and "be joyful," and "take pleasure in all [your] toil," (Eccl. 9:10, 3:12-13). Or as Paul says, "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men," (Col. 3:23).

I know it can sound trite, but "aspire to live a quiet life" is sometimes the best advice (1Tim. 2:2). It's good for your mental health and, in aggregate, is also one of the best solutions to some of the world's big problems too. And remember that the suffering we endure today is a bond of solidarity we share with generations past and future. In the new creation, those of us in Christ will meet our ancestors and our progeny and swap war stories about what we witnessed and suffered, and we will recognize that suffering well and cultivating our garden amidst the turmoil of our times is what gave us ballast, depth, and solidity — as well as compassion, empathy, love, and an opportunity to glorify God.

Read the full article here: <https://erlc.com/resource/how-christians-should-respond-during-war-and-other-tumultuous-times/>

Living in the Goodness of God

By Rick Warren

Psalms 23 is the most well-known chapter in the Bible. Though only six verses long, it presents a dozen vivid metaphors revealing the goodness of God. Contrary to what some scholars suggest, this psalm isn't primarily about David's faith or confidence. It's not about sheep or shepherds. It's about God's unwavering commitment to us. This psalm is 100% about God's goodness, and it contains twelve promises that He makes to you because He is a good God.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for You are with me.

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

This psalm begins and ends with the Lord, centering on His goodness. Today, we'll focus on the final verse: "Surely

goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." This single verse reveals three reasons why believers never need to fear the future.

1. God's Goodness Is Watching Over Me

The Bible says, "Surely goodness will follow me all the days of my life." God's goodness is constant. You've never lived a moment that God wasn't paying attention to you. He created you to love you, and His goodness is always at work.

Psalm 145:20 tells us, "The Lord watches over all who love Him." Beyond observation, He protects you—often in ways you don't see. He sends angels to intervene, redirect, and defend. Angels are real, invisible helpers God uses to shield and guide us. Psalm 91:11 says, "God orders His angels to protect you wherever you go."

Let me illustrate this. A pregnant woman once came to me deeply afraid—she'd just learned her baby had Down syndrome. She was struggling with the decision to continue the pregnancy. I shared Scriptures like Psalm 139, reminding her that God had designed this child with purpose. She decided to keep the baby. I later sent her a postcard of

encouragement, but the post office delivered it to the wrong address. The woman who received it had a Down syndrome child herself. She hand-delivered the card, told the young mother she wasn't alone, and offered to help. That's not coincidence—that's divine orchestration. That's the goodness of God at work.

Now, this verse doesn't say that only good things will happen to you. Bad things happen to all of us. But God promises to bring good out of everything, even the painful things. Romans 8:28 affirms, "We know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into His plans."

When my son Matthew died by suicide after a long battle with mental illness, it was crushing. At the time, there was no visible good. But in the years since, God has brought healing and used our experience to help thousands of others. That's the power of His goodness at work.

2. God's Grace Is Working in Me

Psalm 23 promises not only goodness but also mercy: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me." God's grace—His mercy—is at work in your life every day.

What is mercy? It's grace in action. It's God not giving you what you do deserve. Goodness is when God blesses you beyond what you've earned. Mercy is when He withholds the punishment you do deserve. We need both.

Psalm 103:2–11 describes it beautifully: "He forgives all my sins, heals me, redeems me, surrounds me with loving-kindness. He is merciful and tender... slow to anger, never bears a grudge."

Some of us walk around thinking God is punishing us for mistakes of the past. But Scripture says clearly—He does not hold grudges. His mercy follows you every day.

That means you can bring every sin, every failure, every habitual weakness to Him. He never gets tired of forgiving you.

Hebrews 4:16 encourages us: "We can come before God's throne where we receive mercy and grace to help us when we need it." God's mercy never runs out. That means there's never a time when you can't approach Him for help.

Think of mercy and goodness like two sheepdogs following you. You follow the Shepherd, and behind you are Goodness and Mercy, keeping you from straying, covering your messes, guiding you forward.

3. God's Glory Is Waiting for Me

The third reason you never need to fear the future is this: "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." That's heaven.

This is the grand finale of Psalm 23. For believers, death is not the end—it's a transition. We move from this life into the full presence of God's glory.

God's glory is His goodness in full display. We see glimpses of it now—in nature, in each other, in answered prayer. But in heaven, we'll see His glory in full. Isaiah 63:15 says God dwells in holiness and glory. Acts 7 tells us Stephen, the first Christian martyr, saw God's glory as he died. Heaven is God's home of glory, and one day, it will be ours too.

1 Corinthians 2:9 declares, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him."

Romans 9:23 says, "God wanted to reveal His abundant glory... poured out on us who are the objects of His mercy... whom He prepared in advance to receive His glory." God is planning to share His glory with you. That's almost too incredible to grasp. But it's true.

Living in Light of These Truths

So what does all this mean for your daily life?

1. Be Grateful and Generous

Because God is good, we must live in gratitude and generosity. Psalm 118:29 says, “Give thanks continually to the Lord, because He is so good, and His mercy never runs out.”

Gratitude is the healthiest human emotion. Studies show it improves your mood, your health, and your relationships. You can’t be grateful and fearful at the same time. Fear focuses on self; gratitude focuses on God and others.

Gratitude is also an act of worship. Hebrews 12:28 says, “Be grateful and use our gratitude to worship God the way that pleases Him.”

Generosity is the second response. Matthew 10:8: “You have been treated generously, so live generously.” Generous people are more confident, peaceful, and fearless.

Psalm 112:5–9 says,
“Good will come to him who is generous..
. They will never be shaken. They do not
fear bad news; they are confident and
fearless.”

2. Be Gracious to Everyone

Because God is gracious with you, you must be gracious with others. Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be gracious and merciful to everyone, and forgive others, just as God has forgiven you.”

Love is the antidote to fear. 1 John 4:18 says, “There is no fear in love. Perfect love drives out all fear.”

Unforgiving people are often carrying guilt themselves. But when you fully receive God’s mercy, you become merciful toward others.

3. Live for God's Glory

Because God’s glory is your eternal future, live for His glory now. Matthew 5:16:

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

When you live for God’s glory, it opens your life to more of His grace, goodness, and presence.

1 Peter 1:3 tells us,
“God, in His divine power, has given us everything we need to live a godly life. And He has called us to share in His own goodness and glory.”

Final Challenge

How do you face the future? With anxiety? Fear? Doubt? Or with confidence?

Psalm 23:6 is your antidote:
“Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

You have a choice: live with fear, selfishness, and ingratitude—or live with gratitude, generosity, graciousness, and for the glory of God.

If the Lord is your Shepherd, you can live fearlessly. God’s goodness is watching over you. His mercy is working in you. His glory is waiting for you.

But these promises aren’t for everyone. They are for those who can truly say, “The Lord is my Shepherd.” If He is your Shepherd, you can declare with confidence: “I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Read more of the series:
<https://saddleback.com/watch/living-in-the-goodness-of-god>

God Can Handle Your Crisis

By David Mathis

Have you ever faced a time in life you would call a crisis? Most of us have. In those moments, it can feel like the very ground beneath our feet is shaking. Psalm 46 speaks directly to these moments — not just with comfort, but with a powerful, stabilizing vision of who God is when everything else seems to be falling apart.

Psalm 46 was written in a time of crisis — a threat to Jerusalem by hostile nations or natural catastrophe. But it doesn't identify the crisis specifically, and that's part of its power: these words weren't written for one crisis, but for many. They are timeless truths for every generation of God's people.

God Is Our Refuge and Strength

The psalm opens by declaring where our help comes from — not in our circumstances, not in ourselves, but in God.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

God is our safe place (refuge) and our inner power (strength). He is both protection from the outside and empowerment on the inside. And he is not a distant protector — he is “very present,” intimately involved in our troubles.

The psalm then moves through two kinds of threats: the trembling earth and raging nations. Yet in the face of these, it boldly declares: “We will not fear” (v. 2). This is not denial; it's defiance against fear because of who God is. If God's people can be at peace when the mountains

crumble and kingdoms fall, we can face any crisis with confidence.

He Is Infinitely Strong

One of the main purposes of this psalm is to remind us that God is strong — infinitely strong. He doesn't just speak comfort into our fear; he speaks power. Verse 6 says, “He utters his voice, the earth melts.” He doesn't need weapons or force — his voice alone is enough to bring both judgment and peace.

In verse 9, we read:

“He makes wars cease... breaks the bow... burns the chariots with fire.”

God has the power to end every battle. And one day, he will. Our confidence is not wishful thinking; it is rooted in the power and sovereignty of God who has promised final peace.

He Is Attentively Present

And yet, this God — infinitely powerful — is also near. He is not aloof or detached from our suffering. He is eager to help. His presence is like a river running through the heart of a besieged city, bringing gladness even in the midst of war:

“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God... God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved.” (Psalm 46:4-5)

This river contrasts the earlier imagery of the roaring sea. The sea is chaos; the river is life-giving and sustaining. This is what God's presence is like. Not only does he

get us through our crises — he gives us joy in the midst of them.

That presence, once tied to a physical city — Jerusalem — is now found in the person of Jesus. For Christians, our refuge is not in a place but in a person. And together, as the body of Christ, the Church becomes the context in which we experience his help and joy. God’s people “shall not be moved” — not because we are strong, but because He is with us.

Still, God’s help doesn’t always come on our schedule. Verse 5 says, “God will help her when morning dawns.” He does not promise immediate deliverance, but he promises sure deliverance. Just as he rescued Israel at the Red Sea “when the morning appeared” (Exodus 14:27), he will help you — in his perfect time.

He Will Be Exalted

The climax of the psalm comes in verse 10:

“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

This is not just a call to calm down. It’s a divine declaration: stop striving, stop fearing — God is in control. The nations rage, kingdoms fall, but God will be exalted. And that certainty anchors us. His exaltation is not a distant theological idea — it is the ground beneath our feet in crisis. His victory is our security.

This exaltation matters because it means the chaos around us will not have the final word. God will. He will be lifted high, and in that exaltation, we find peace.

A Fortress That Never Fails

The psalm ends with this refrain:

“The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.” (Psalm 46:11)

This fortress is more than a refuge — it is an impenetrable stronghold, a place of unshakable security. For those in Christ,

God is not just a momentary shield but an eternal fortress. He is infinitely strong, attentively present, and absolutely certain to be exalted.

So in your crisis — whether global or deeply personal — do not fear. Be still. Know that He is God. He is with you, He is for you, and He will not fail.

Watch the video: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/god-can-handle-your-crisis>



Four Truths About God's Provision

By Matt Brown

When you put your faith in Christ, God commissions himself to protect, provide, and care for you ([Philippians 4:19](#)). God always provides for his children, though often it is not in the way we expect or hope.

The challenge is for us to see his provision and care, even when it is different than we expect. Because God is God, his ways are higher than our ways ([Isaiah 55:9](#)). But he graciously gives us insight into what he is doing in the Scriptures.

John Piper says, “God is always doing 10,000 things in your life, but you may be aware of three of them.” Over and over again, Jesus’s disciples missed what he was doing right in front of them. They missed the point of the miracles. They missed the lessons. Which should give us hope for our own lack of clarity today. Here are four important encouragements about how God provides and cares for you.

1. God May Provide Differently Than We Expect

The Israelites escaped captivity in Egypt only to face the challenges of the desert. One of the biggest challenges for such a large group of nomads was enough food to eat. Over and over again God provided supernaturally for his people. If God could provide for many thousands of Israelites in the middle of a desert, he can surely provide for you and your family’s

needs. One of the precious testimonies of Scripture is, “I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his children begging for bread” ([Psalm 37:25](#)).

But even with God’s supernatural provision, the Israelites still complained and grumbled in the desert. They longed for the food they left behind in Egypt. God was literally providing bread from heaven — enough for each day — but they wanted his provision a different way. They wanted it their own way.

This lesson has spoken to me over the years. Ask God to provide for you in whatever way he deems fit. Don’t grumble against God’s supernatural, unexpected ways.

Maybe you are at a job and doing work different than what you had expected or hoped for. Don’t always wish for something different. Don’t constantly dream about being somewhere else, doing something else. Be present. Give your all to your current job, and always be thankful ([1 Thessalonians 5:18](#)). This doesn’t mean you can’t move towards the job of your dreams, but it might inspire the faith to stop complaining about the way God has provided for you in the current moment, and instead invest yourself fully wherever you are.

2. God Provides More of Himself

Our greatest need is for more of God, and this is something he gladly gives us.

“Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” ([Matthew 7:9–11](#))

Scripture tells us to make the pursuit of God the primary function of our lives. [Matthew 6:33](#) says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” [Psalm 37:4](#) says, “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

John Piper has asked, “What is the deepest root of your joy? What God gives to you? Or what God is to you?” God graciously guides us into a greater realization that our ultimate need is for more of his word, more of his ways—more of him.

3. God’s Ultimate Provision Has Already Been Given in the Gospel

We ask God for many things, but the greatest thing we could ever receive from him has already been given. What God has given us in the gospel is light-years ahead of every other provision and care we could ever seek from him. When we trust in Christ, we have decisively secured for us every ultimately good thing from him. It’s just a matter of time.

[James 1:17](#) reminds us, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” Every truly good thing in our lives comes straight from the Father. The ultimate good he provided us, through whom much of the other good things come to us, is Jesus. Jesus is the ultimate treasure.

4. God Provides Finally in Eternity

Hebrews 11 gives us two different

perspectives on God’s provision and care for us. Some, by faith, came through this life victorious, while others lost their lives. Both are commended for their mighty faith.

God does not always provide and care for us in ways we might expect in this life. The Bible does not promise this. Peter, James, John, and Paul gave their very lives for the gospel. They viewed the gospel as a treasure not to be lost at any cost. They suffered gladly because they had something in the gospel that had far more worth.

This life is fleeting. This life is fragile. This life is but a vapor’s breath. The next life, the age to come, is where all God’s provision and care for us will ultimately make sense and come together as a whole.

We may not receive healing in this life, but we will receive perfect healing in eternity. We may not see answers to our greatest prayers in this life, but we will receive fully in eternity. Some days God’s provision and care may seem distant, but it will be ever-present in eternity. We long for our world to stop raging and be at peace, but ultimate peace will only come in eternity.

Our hearts ache under the pressures of this life, but it is only because we were made for another world. We are sojourners and aliens on this earth. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” ([1 Peter 2:9](#)).

Read the full article: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/four-truths-about-gods-provision>

Growing Faith in the Face of Death

By Tim Keller

I have spent a good part of my life talking with people about the role of faith in the face of imminent death. Since I became an ordained Presbyterian minister in 1975, I have sat at countless bedsides, and occasionally even watched someone take their final breath. I recently wrote a small book, [On Death](#), relating a lot of what I say to people in such times. But when, a little more than a month after that book was published, I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, I was still caught unprepared. ...

My wife, Kathy, and I spent much time in tears and disbelief. We were both turning 70, but felt strong, clear-minded, and capable of nearly all the things we have done for the past 50 years. “I thought we’d feel a lot older when we got to this age,” Kathy said. We had plenty of plans and lots of comforts, especially our children and grandchildren. We expected some illness to come and take us when we felt really old. But not now, not yet. This couldn’t be; what was God doing to us? The Bible, and especially the Psalms, gave voice to our feelings: “Why, O Lord, do you stand far off?” “Wake up, O Lord. Why are you sleeping?” “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?”

A significant number of believers in God find their faith shaken or destroyed when they learn that they will die at a time and in a way that seems unfair to them. Before my diagnosis, I had seen this in

people of many faiths. One woman with cancer told me years ago, “I’m not a believer anymore—that doesn’t work for me. I can’t believe in a personal God who would do something like this to me.” Cancer killed her God.

What would happen to me? I felt like a surgeon who was suddenly on the operating table. Would I be able to take my own advice?

One of the first things I learned was that religious faith does not automatically provide solace in times of crisis. A belief in God and an afterlife does not become spontaneously comforting and existentially strengthening. Despite my rational, conscious acknowledgment that I would die someday, the shattering reality of a fatal diagnosis provoked a remarkably strong psychological denial of mortality. Instead of acting on Dylan Thomas’s advice to “rage, rage against the dying of the light,” I found myself thinking, What? No! I can’t die. That happens to others, but not to me. When I said these outrageous words out loud, I realized that this delusion had been the actual operating principle of my heart. ...

Our beliefs about God and an afterlife, if we have them, are often abstractions as well. If we don’t accept the reality of death, we don’t need these beliefs to be anything other than mental assents. A feigned battle in a play or a movie requires only stage props. But as death, the last enemy, became real to my heart, I

realized that my beliefs would have to become just as real to my heart, or I wouldn't be able to get through the day. Theoretical ideas about God's love and the future resurrection had to become life-gripping truths, or be discarded as useless. ...

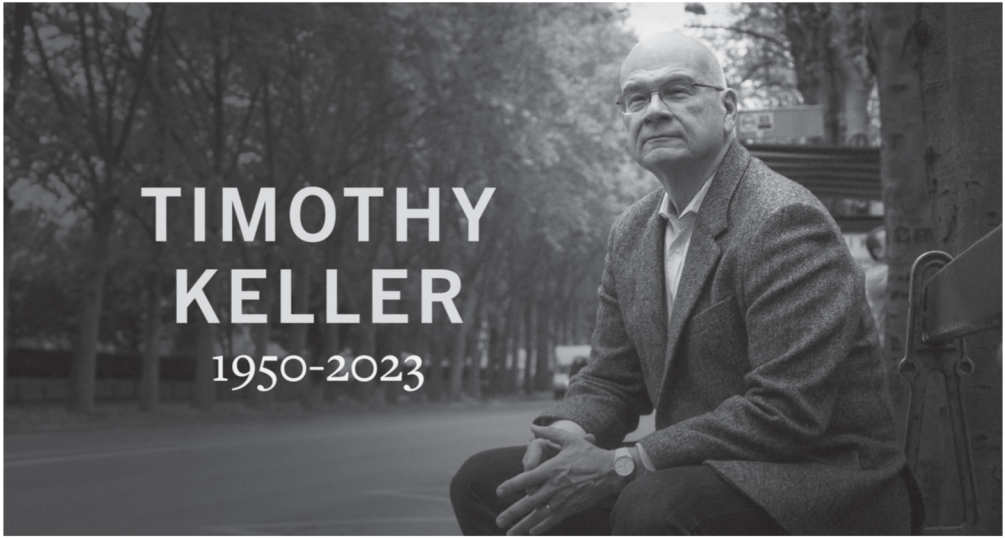
So when the certainty of your mortality and death finally breaks through, is there a way to face it without debilitating fear? Is there a way to spend the time you have left growing into greater grace, love, and wisdom? I believe there is, but it requires both intellectual and emotional engagement: head work and heart work.

I use the terms head and heart to mean reasoning and feeling, adapting to the modern view that these two things are independent faculties. The Hebrew scriptures, however, see the heart as the seat of the mind, will, and emotions. Proverbs says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." In other words, rational conviction and experience might change my mind, but the shift would not be complete until it took root in my heart. And so I set out to reexamine my convictions and to strengthen my faith,

so that it might prove more than a match for death. ...

Why is it that people in prosperous, modern societies seem to struggle so much with the existence of evil, suffering, and death? In his book *A Secular Age*, the philosopher Charles Taylor wrote that while humans have always struggled with the ways and justice of God, until quite recently no one had concluded that suffering made the existence of God implausible. For millennia, people held a strong belief in their own inadequacy or sinfulness, and did not hold the modern assumption that we all deserve a comfortable life. Moreover, Taylor has argued, we have become so confident in our powers of logic that if we cannot imagine any good reason that suffering exists, we assume there can't be one.

But if there is a God great enough to merit your anger over the suffering you witness or endure, then there is a God great enough to have reasons for allowing it that you can't detect. It is not logical to believe in an infinite God and still be convinced that you can tally the



**TIMOTHY
KELLER**
1950-2023

sums of good and evil as he does, or to grow angry that he doesn't always see things your way. Taylor's point is that people say their suffering makes faith in God impossible—but it is in fact their overconfidence in themselves and their abilities that sets them up for anger, fear, and confusion.

When I got my cancer diagnosis, I had to look not only at my professed beliefs, which align with historical Protestant orthodoxy, but also at my actual understanding of God. Had it been shaped by my culture? Had I been slipping unconsciously into the supposition that God lived for me rather than I for him, that life should go well for me, that I knew better than God does how things should go? The answer was yes—to some degree. I found that to embrace God's greatness, to say "Thy will be done," was painful at first and then, perhaps counterintuitively, profoundly liberating. To assume that God is as small and finite as we are may feel freeing—but it offers no remedy for anger. ...

For me as a Christian, Jesus's costly love, death, and resurrection had become not just something I believed and filed away, but a hope that sustained me all day. I pray this prayer daily. Occasionally it electrifies, but ultimately it always calms:

And as I lay down in sleep and rose this morning only by your grace, keep me in the joyful, lively remembrance that whatever happens, I will someday know my final rising, because Jesus Christ lay down in death for me, and rose for my justification.

As this spiritual reality grows, what are the effects on how I live? One of the most difficult results to explain is what happened to my joys and fears. Since my diagnosis, Kathy and I have come to see that the more we tried to make a heaven out of this world—the more we grounded our comfort and security in it—the less

we were able to enjoy it. ...

To our surprise and encouragement, Kathy and I have discovered that the less we attempt to make this world into a heaven, the more we are able to enjoy it.

No longer are we burdening it with demands impossible for it to fulfill. We have found that the simplest things—from sun on the water and flowers in the vase to our own embraces, sex, and conversation—bring more joy than ever. This has taken us by surprise.

This change was not an overnight revolution. As God's reality dawns more on my heart, slowly and painfully and through many tears, the simplest pleasures of this world have become sources of daily happiness. It is only as I have become, for lack of a better term, more heavenly minded that I can see the material world for the astonishingly good divine gift that it is.

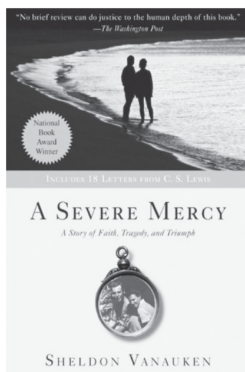
I can sincerely say, without any sentimentality or exaggeration, that I've never been happier in my life, that I've never had more days filled with comfort. But it is equally true that I've never had so many days of grief. One of our dearest friends lost her husband to cancer six years ago. Even now, she says, she might seem fine, and then out of nowhere some reminder or thought will sideswipe her and cripple her with sorrow.

Yes. But I have come to be grateful for those sideswipes, because they remind me to reorient myself to the convictions of my head and the processes of my heart. When I take time to remember how to deal with my fears and savor my joys, the consolations are stronger and sweeter than ever.

Read the article here: https://taxprof.typepad.com/taxprof_blog/2022/01/tim-keller-growing-my-faith-in-the-face-of-death.html

Check It Out: Books, Apps etc.

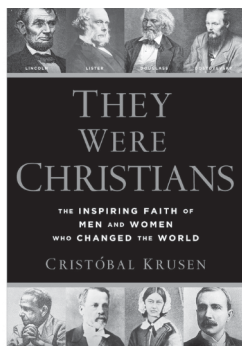
Please send in your recommendations of books, podcasts, apps or shows to:
contact@thewinepress.org



Books

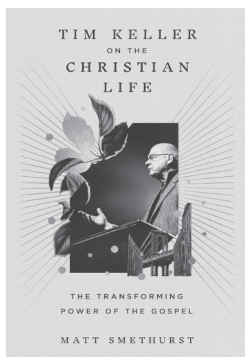
A Severe Mercy by Sheldon Vanauken

The profoundly moving and heart-rendering classic for anyone who has experienced the depths of love and loss. Reflecting on faith, vitality, and grief, this “spiritual autobiography of a love rather than of the lovers” opens our hearts and eyes to the true meaning of life, and death. In *A Severe Mercy*, Sheldon Vanauken stunningly chronicles his marriage to his beloved wife, Davy, his faith-forming friendship with C.S. Lewis and the tragedy that altered his soul and spirit completely.



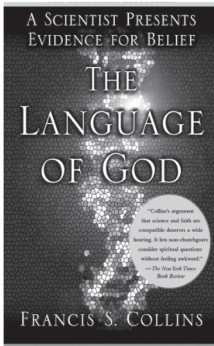
They Were Christians By Cristóbal Krusen

What do Abraham Lincoln, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Louis Pasteur, Frederick Douglass, Florence Nightingale, and John D. Rockefeller Sr. all have in common? They all changed the world--and they were all Christians. Now the little-known stories of faith behind twelve influential people of history are available in one inspiring volume.



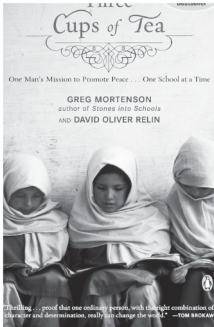
Tim Keller on the Christian Life By Matt Smethurst

Synthesizing Keller’s work topic by topic, each chapter of this book highlights a key aspect of the Christian life—covering his views on prayer, suffering, friendship, vocation, intimacy with God, and more. Written by pastor Matt Smethurst, *Tim Keller on the Christian Life* draws from Keller’s nearly 50 years of sermons, conference messages, and books to share practical theological insight that will galvanize leaders and laypeople alike.



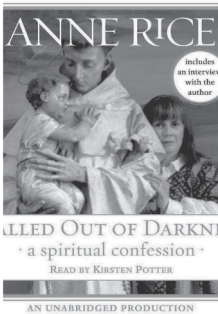
The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief **By Francis Collins**

It has long been believed that science and faith cannot mingle. Faith rejects the rational, while science restricts us to a life with no meaning beyond the physical. *The Language of God* provides a testament to the power of faith in the midst of suffering without faltering from its logical stride. Readers will be inspired by Collin's personal story of struggling with doubt, as well as the many revelations of the wonder of God's creation that will forever shape the way they view the world around them.



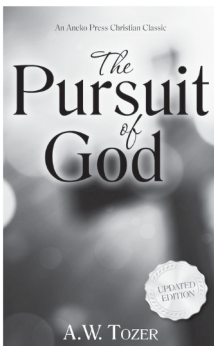
Three Cups of Tea **By Greg Mortenson**

The astonishing, uplifting story of a real-life Indiana Jones and his humanitarian campaign to use education to combat terrorism in the Taliban's backyard. Anyone who despairs of the individual's power to change lives has to read the story of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who, following a 1993 climb of Pakistan's treacherous K2, was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. *Three Cups of Tea* combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit.



Called Out of Darkness **By Anne Rice**

In 2005, Anne Rice startled her readers with her novel *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*, and by revealing that, after years as an atheist, she had returned to her Catholic faith. And now, in her powerful and haunting memoir, Rice tells the story of the spiritual transformation that produced a complete change in her literary goals.



The Pursuit of God **By A. W. Tozer**

To have found God and still to pursue Him is a paradox of love, scorned indeed by the too-easily-satisfied religious person, but justified in happy experience by the children of the burning heart. Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. Let A. W. Tozer's pursuit of God spur you also into a genuine hunger and thirst to truly know God.

Prayer Focus

For Strengthened Faith & Spiritual Growth

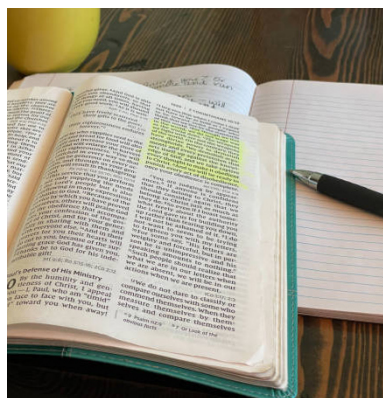
This month, our prayer focus is on spiritual growth—cultivating a deeper, more intimate relationship with God through time in His Word and daily prayer. In the busyness of life, it's easy to skip devotions or let prayer become an afterthought. But God invites us to draw near to Him, to be strengthened and renewed by His presence. This month let's commit to set aside time to read the Word, meditate on His truth, and commune with Him in prayer, so that our hearts and minds will be transformed. Let's pray that we will make it a priority to have consistent time with the Lord, allowing His Spirit to strengthen us. Let's pray for a renewed hunger for the Word, a deeper desire to be in His presence, and that He will help us to prioritize our time with Him above all else.

Psalm 1:2-3 "But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper."

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Psalm 62: 1-2 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.



Our Strength & Shield

Words from Jesus - Sarah Young

I am your Strength and your Shield. I continually work—sometimes in wondrous ways—to invigorate you and protect you. The more fully you trust in Me, the more your heart can leap for Joy!

I want you to trust Me wholeheartedly—resting in My sovereign control over the universe. When circumstances seem to be spinning out of control, grab onto Me, believing that I know what I'm doing. I orchestrate every event of your life to benefit you in this world and the next." ~Jesus Always by Sarah Young

"I love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." ~Psalm 18:1-2

